

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6368

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 7671

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, CB, TH

SUBJECT: AID REAR OFFICE IN BANGKOK

1. I KNOW YOU HAVE ALREADY INTERVENED ONCE WITH OUR EMBASSY IN BANGKOK STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AID REAR OFFICE SUPPORTING THE AID OPERATION IN CAMBODIA. DESPITE ALL EFFORTS MADE, THIS MATTER HAS NOT YET BEEN RESOLVED. UNLESS THIS PROBLEM IS SETTLED WITHOUT DELAY, WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RECRUIT OR HOLD THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED TO STAFF THIS REAR OFFICE. I FULLY SYMPATHIZE WITH TOM OLMSTED, THE AID DIRECTOR HERE, WHO CANNOT EFFECTIVELY OPERATE AND SUPERVISE A TOTAL PROGRAM INCLUDING PL 480 SALES OF NEARLY THREE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS WITH 23 AMERICANS IN PHNOM PENH. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT EVERYBODY AGREED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REAR OFFICE.

2. I ALSO CONCUR IN THE CONCLUSION THAT A REAR OFFICE WILL NOT WORK UNLESS THE REAR OFFICE AND THE SAFEHAVEN ARE AT THE SAME PLACE. CONCEPT BEHIND BANGKOK AS A REAR OFFICE WAS THAT OFFICE AND SAFEHAVEN WOULD BOTH BE THERE. THE REAR OFFICE MUST ALSO HAVE GOOD COMMUNICATION FACILITIES WITH PHNOM PENH. WE HAVE ALREADY ESTABLISHED TELEPHONE AND TELEX SERVICE BETWEEN PHNOM PENH AND BANGKOK. THERE MUST ALSO BE REGULAR TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS THAT FIT INTO THE RHYTHM OF THE PHNOM PENH OPERATION. AID ALREADY HAS SET UP A CONTRACT FOR AIR SERVICE WITH CONTINENTAL AIRLINE. SINCE OFFICERS WILL BE VISITING FAMILIES IN SAFEHAVEN, IT IS FEASIBLE TO ARRANGE WORK AT

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VISITATION. THIS HAS A BENEFICIAL MORALE IMPACT AND MAKES

THE POST MORE ATTRACTIVE, SOMETHING NEEDED BECAUSE RECRUITING FOR PHNOM PENH IS DIFFICULT TO SAY THE LEAST. IN SHORT, BANGKOK IS THE PLACE FOR A REAR OFFICE IF IT IS TO WORK EFFECTIVELY.

3. I REALIZE THAT A NEW GOVERNMENT HAS JUST TAKEN OFFICE IN BANGKOK BUT I BELIEVE DEPARTMENT MUST MAKE DECISION ON HOW HARD IT WANTS EMBASSY BANGKOK TO PUSH TO GET THAI ACQUIESCENCE IN SETTING UP THIS REAR OPERATION. IF DEPARTMENT WANTS AID IN CAMBODIA TO DO A SATISFACTORY JOB, THEN THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE BUT APPROACHING THE THAIS AT APPROPRIATE LEVEL TO GET THE RESULT WHICH WE BELIVE IS IN OVERALL U.S. GOVERNMENT INTEREST. THIS MAY NOT REQUIRE FORMAL THAI APPROVAL; FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW ATTACHING THESE U.S. GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL TO THE U.S. MISSION IN BANGKOK FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF THE USG WOULD BE QUITE ACCEPTABLE. A SEPARATE IDENTIFIABLE OFFICE IS NOT IN AND OF ITSELF NECESSARY BUT ONLY A LOCATION TO WHICH THESE PEOPLE CAN BE ASSIGNED AND WHERE THEY CAN WORK. THAIS HAVE BEEN PROCRASTINATING AND GOVERNMENT CRISIS IN THAILAND HAS CLEARLY PUSHED THIS ISSUE ON THE BACK BURNER. I APPEAL TO YOU TO GET BUREAU'S ATTENTION FOCUSSED ON THIS ISSUE IN THE HOPE THAT IT WILL LEAD TO THE KIND OF INSTRUCTIONS TO BANGKOK WHICH WILL BREAK THIS BOTTLENECK. MANY THANKS FOR YOUR CONTINUED STRONG SUPPORT WHICH IS MOST APPRECIATED, ESPECIALLY IN THESE TRYING TIMES.

DEAN

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